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MARGARET BARBER BOWEN



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SINGING PLACES

SINGING PLACES

BY
MARGARET BARBER BOWEN



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TO
A. B. C.
WHO GOING DOWN THE PATH OF
PAIN FINDS SINGING PLACES

973014

*The Path of Pain is very dark
And very, very long,
But even in its utter deeps
Somewhere upsprings a song.*

SINGING PLACES

SINGING PLACES

MY PILGRIMAGE

Whereso'er my journeyings
Over Earth's uncharted beauties
There is something clear that sings
Down my path of daily duties.

As I make my pilgrimage
Thro' a world endowed with graces,
Joy becomes my heritage;
Lo! I walk thro' singing places.

Like a bird within its cage
So my Heart a Song encases;
Wheresoe'er my pilgrimage
Still it leads thro' singing places.

SINGING PLACES

THE BLUE NUNS SING

Each day with setting of the sun
From cloistered shelter slowly file
The Nuns in Blue, and one by one,
Proceed in shadows down the aisle.

(The outer bloom of Life and Sun
Must be denied a holy Nun.)

Then seated silently apart,
From mundane worshippers defined,
These singers of the contrite heart
Begin the worship of their kind.

But in the music, sweetly sung,
The prisoned Woman's soul makes cry—
The Womanhood so rudely flung
Aside as sin, unconsciously,
Unbidden, but insistent still,
Sings with a voice that's all her own.
The Nun is fabric of the will,
But Woman—God can make alone!

The singing ceases with the light,
The fleeting candle-gold is gone;
The Blue Nuns pass into the night,
Their tiny glimpse of Day is done.

(The outer bloom of Life and Sun
Must be denied a holy Nun.)

SINGING PLACES

AT THE ENGLISH CRAFT-SHOP IN CASA GUIDI

(The Home of the Brownings in Florence)

Within the Casa Guidi mute I stood
Where from its famed casement I could see
Palazzo Pitti, and the Boboli
Flinging its bloom across my memoried mood.
Resist those memories, whosoever could
Despite the lure of lapis lazuli
And sun-kissed amber fashioned graciously—
For here insistent did her presence brood—
That English linnet, small and lyric-wise
Who sang her heart out 'neath these Tuscan skies.
So tiptoed I the stair past her dear door,
Her craft-shop, where so radiantly were wrought
The lucent jewels of a woman's thought . . .
The craft-shop Casa Guidi knows no more.

SINGING PLACES

PAESTUM

Slowly o'er the plains to Paestum
 Trailed the tourist train;
Bleak and bare and grim they stretched there
 In the April rain.

Slowly o'er the plains to Paestum—
 Suddenly a bush
All aflame with reddening Springtime
 Broke the visual hush.

Slowly o'er the plains to Paestum
 Pilgrimage divine,
Pilgrimage to pagan temples—
 What religion thine!

Noblest records of religion—
 Pagan was it? Then
Might the Christian churches' builders
 Pagans be again!

For a wave of utter worship
 Flooded all my soul,
And the peace of perfect Beauty
 On my spirit stole.

Beauty in its great dimensions
 Nothing is but God—
And beside those pagan temples
 Knelt I on the sod.

SINGING PLACES

Would that in ornate St. Peter's
One could send a prayer
Unassisted, straight to Heaven
As in temples there,

Where the myriad emerald lizards
Gleaming where we pass
Praise him with their lucent beauty
In the emerald grass;

Where those old and sacred columns
Towering up in calm
Are a moulded Benediction
And a builded Psalm.

. . .

Slowly o'er the plains from Paestum,
From the temples there,
Came we chastened into Cava,
Purified by prayer.

SINGING PLACES

RAVELLO

Breathless from the dizzy beauty of that drive
within a dream

Turquoise-colored, emerald-tinted, sapphire-
shrouded, wind we still

Upward, upward, ever upward, toward that cita-
del supreme

Which in centuries now silent held dominion
on the hill.

Over roads where Latin princes, proudly mounted,
used to ride,

Roads which wear a look eternal, telling Man
he is but dust,

Winding, winding, ever-winding, serpent-like they
coil and glide

Round the crags and thro' the forests, and we
follow where we must!

Pulsing, panting, palpitating, at the glory all
amaze,

Winding, winding, ever-upward in a wonder-
woven spell,

Till at last Completed Beauty lies before our sated
gaze,

And the olive-cheeked Giuseppe murmurs
raptly: "E Ravell'!"

SINGING PLACES

THE LEPER ON THE CAPRI ROAD

I pray your gracious alms, Signora, sweet.
A leper I, and tho' the scene be gay
With hyacinthine glimpses of the bay,
And orange-hedges coloring the street,
Yet am I sombre, lacking bread and meat;
No home but any lane wherein I stray,
Which dimmer grows as dimmer grows the day,
And wearier and worn my lagging feet.
I pray your gracious alms, O lady fair,
For as I caught the rustle of your gown,
And glimpsed the burnished amber of your hair,
I thought the Lady Mary had come down
In visioned answer to my silent prayer
To raise me up and crown me with her crown.

SINGING PLACES

AT OBERAMMERGAU

The Christ hangs white upon the cross,
The Marys silent weep,
And thief to left, and thief to right
Is sunk in shamèd sleep.

Then through the gloom of stricken throng
Strained in remorseful hush,
There shimmers sweet a triumph note—
God's messenger—a thrush!

SINGING PLACES

THE GARDEN-HOUSE AT WEIMAR

In the Garden-House at Weimar wistful with the
June
Peeped I forth from long-craved casement (bliss-
ful boon!)
From the cherished crystal casements whence his
frequent face
Had gazed down in sweet enjoyment of this place.

Emerald lawn and shaded pathway, cool and very
dim,
Velvet moss, a fragrant carpet crushed by him,
Flowering bush with eager Bluebird on its tilting
bough
To be telling of his music shrilly now.

Of his sweetly haunting music, wildest ecstasy
Mingling with a sadly-sweeter misery,
Music sometimes fondly chiming manly friend-
ship's strain
With its moving Schiller-*motif*, and again

Music shadowed with the sorrow of a love-lost
way,
Or again, the glorious passion of to-day.
These the strains the eager Bluebird would for me
retell
With its tiny-toned re-chiming silver bell.

SINGING PLACES

Then a sudden, April-mocking, uninvited shower
Quick eclipsing Bird-in-song and Bush-in-flower,
But around the Titan-torrent flickered all the
while

Golden sunshine, swift-recalling Goethe's smile!

Round the Garden-House at Weimar linger Sun
and Rain,

Nature's subtle reminiscence—Joy and Pain
Such as filled the days of Goethe when his urgent
art

Was the bitter-sweet absorption of his heart.

Round the Garden-House at Weimar slowly Dusk
drew on

Cautious, dubious of the Daylight as a faun.
Thro' the silent, perfumed wetness, faintly breath-
ing by,

Then I heard the inspiration of a sigh!

And his spirit, in the dimness, almost touched my
own

Then, the mystic bond was broken—he was flown!
But the Garden-House at Weimar with its Goethe
thrill

Burned a scarlet spot in Memory—vivid still.

SINGING PLACES

IN A COLLEGE GARDEN

(Oxford)

How could'st thou, Shelley, in this sacred spot
Feel God is not?
Where every gracious bush and mystic flower
Proclaims His power,
Where Wisdom permeates the cloistral air
And proves Him there?
For what is Wisdom but a branch of God,
A flowering rod
Assuring by its very blossoming
That it did spring
From out a source beyond its patentness—
Could'st thou not guess
What Source? Thou ardent beauty-loving soul,
Not guess the whole,
When its so-radiant and persuading part
Entranced thy heart?
This hour within the University
They showed to me
Thy writing—by thy certain boyish hand—
When thou did'st stand
Declaring in thy knowledge, youngly-sure,
With purpose pure,
That no Supremer Being did exist;
An atheist

SINGING PLACES

Thou with a fondly-proud publicity
Did'st claim to be.
O brave pathetic Boy! In thy white days
To choose thy ways
Alone, and unsustained essay thy flight
Thro' Life's black night . . .
Within thy Skylark on his starward wing—
In that small thing—
Unconsciously a greater wisdom grew—
He knew, he knew!
“Blithe Spirit,” he winged surely to the skies,
So wise, so wise!

SINGING PLACES

THE LOVELY LADS OF RUGBY

(“*Dulce Domum Resonemus*”)

We waited there at Rugby
For the oncoming train
And thro’ my thoughts the Rugby lads
Came homing back again.

So sweet a home is Rugby
That surely never yet
E’en space or years or sorrows
Could make the lads forget.

And now when England summons
They swift obey her call—
But turn their hearts to Rugby
Ere they must fight or fall.

Dear lads, the flower of England,
How gallant an array!
(For they are Youth incarnate
Upon this dreaming day.)

True to their master’s model,
In nobleness defined
They marched in blithe battalions
Thro’ my enmemoried mind.

SINGING PLACES

The music of their marching
 Made mystical refrain—
Then sang itself to silence
 With the approaching train.

.

O lovely lads of Rugby,
 Where are you marching now?
And which of you bears Death's calm kiss
 Upon his boyish brow?

SINGING PLACES

JOYCE KILMER

Within a rolling meadow above the river Ourcq,
Which flows beneath the autumn sun serenely to
the sea,

There rises straight a small green copse—

“The Wood of the Burned Bridge”—

Which has a look of sheltering, as tree stands close
by tree.

The little wood protectingly spreads out its
branching arms—

As e'en a human mother might to shield a cher-
ished child—

To guard the new-made mound of one who, sing-
ing, went to sleep

With all the blithe sweet melody of youth still
undefiled.

A cypress-spray lies friendly-wise upon his silent
graveside,

Placed tenderly by comrades in an ecstasy of
sadness—

But over there this singing boy, safe with the
Judge All-righteous,

May know himself anointed with the oil of utter
gladness.

SINGING PLACES

Long may the little watchful wood stand sentinel
above him,
Soft may the little river run thro' bloodstained
meadow clover,
Until the poppies fill the grass proclaiming Peace
perpetual,
And Song immortal rise on wings—warfare for-
ever over!

SINGING PLACES

SIDNEY LANIER

His lyric wings superbly rove
The rarer ether, far above
The simpler blue wherein do move
The ordinary birds of song
To which we—you and I—belong—
(Our wings are neither sure nor strong.)

But he—a princely Nightingale—
With movements true to star-set sail
Undrooping thro' the sternest gale
Leaves us small sparrows near the ground
Still chirping—gay that he has found
The wonder-winding Way of Sound.

His lovely lingering notes of flute,
Or softly-singing strains of lute,
Make other music-makers mute;
So perfectly he knew his art,
A Song went singing down his heart
Unknowing where it found its start!

SINGING PLACES

TO SAROJINI NAIDU

(On Reading "The Broken Wing")

From western Winter's stern and loveless cold
Wistful for warmth and rapture, to your mild
And lucent East, O "Golden-hearted Child,"
We turn—to glimpse its beauties manifold
Enmirrored for our eyes, as deft you hold
The glass to visions—mystic, joyous, wild—
As if the Orient Spring looked in and smiled
To see her image violet and gold.

Chakora-birds come blithely at your call;
Thrilled by your voice the oleanders bloom,
Like us, swift servants to your lyric thrall;
The lotus-buds burst gladly in the gloom;
Saffron and silver, radiant over all
The magic Dawn escapes her nightly doom.

SINGING PLACES

EMILY DICKINSON

*(When she "took up her simple wardrobe and
started for the Sun")*

How was it when you reached the Gate?

I think it was like this:

You asked St. Peter was it late?

You didn't want to miss

Your personal appointment,

For you had come to stay.

He, twinkling, deft, the Gate unlocked

And beckoned you, "This Way."

Within the outer halls you met

Old friends of Soul and Mind,

But nodding amicably you

Just left them there behind

To penetrate Sanctissimum

And find Himself, The Lord—

'Twas He who asked you to respond

And you could not afford

To scatter silver instants

When He awaited you—

So punctual, and unperplexed,

You knocked a time or two;

Then Milton came, and Shakespeare,

Polite and very bland,

SINGING PLACES

Said, "Emily, allow me!"
And kissed your little hand.
But you, indifferent, hurried in,
When they had had their say,
With "I am looking for the Lord,
I called on Him to-day!"

SINGING PLACES

SOROLLA Y BASTIDA

There came a vital impulse out of Spain,
All Joyousness, all Nature, and all Light;
A peasant-painter, conqueror of Pain,
Portrayer of a pagan-pure Delight.
The Elemental issues from his brush;
Humanity breaks bonds from the Effete;
The Sun, the Skies, the Seas, in primal rush
Recover from conventionalized retreat.
Enrapturing maidens, tawny-skinned and glad
Sport in abandon, sunshine-kissed and free,
And unrestrained, in Youth's brief beauty clad
Play Atalanta by the frolic sea . . .
Our thanks, Sorolla, and our homage, take,
For this, thy glimpse of blithe reality,
And many a pilgrimage we fain would make
To watch thy mirthful waifs of Arcady.

SINGING PLACES

THE VIOLINIST

O Master of the glorious instrument
Which voices all the deeps and mysteries
Of souls that yearn in songful sacrament
To offer up their grateful ecstasies,
Of hearts that throb with music unexpressed,
That pulse with joy or break in hidden shame
To loose the imprisoned music, and confessed
Stand forth the Artist 'midst a world's acclaim!
Be, mighty Master, but the Servant, too,
Of these, who dumb, thrill to themselves alone;
Let their hushed melody burst forth thro' you
As in the dim harmonics' tender tone
The silent music of such souls upsprings
And sobs itself away upon your strings.

SINGING PLACES

THE LULLABY OF MARY MOTHER

I creep between my friendly sheets
As white and crisp as snow,
And then I seem
(As in a dream)
To hear so soft, so low,
The Holy Mary singing—
As my Mother sings to me
So sings she to her little boy
Who died upon the tree:

“Sweetly sleep, O Heart o’ my Heart,
Thy mother doth watch o’er thee.”

(O Mary Mother, dost thou know
Thy son whom thou dost fondle so
Will die upon the tree?)

“Sleep sweet, sleep deep, O Heart o’ my Heart,
Nay, do not tremble and weep and start,
Hush—hush—sleep sweet, sleep deep, my Heart,
Soft little Heart o’ my Heart!”

SINGING PLACES

MY MOTHER'S EYES

Pure pools of perfect Joy they are,
So liquid, lucent, lovely, dear,
Dilating with a swift surprise,
Grown radiant and crystal clear,
Or deep with Mother-mysteries—
My Mother's Eyes!

Amid the darker days of Life
Two tender Stars that shine so true
Flame thro' the Darkness, which denies
Its sombre and despairing hue
When it in dear delight describes
My Mother's Eyes!

O pools of Joy! O shining Stars!
Transmit your loveliness to me,
That as the flitting Time-life flies
And flutters to Eternity,
Still here may glow, below the skies,
My Mother's Eyes!

SINGING PLACES

MY LADY OF THE MORNING FACE

O Lady of the morning face,
Where is your present dwelling-place?
Have you a pair of purple wings,
And in your hand a harp that sings?

Or do you climb the heavenly hills
To dance among the daffodils—
To pluck each golden dew-filled cup—
And help the little angels up?

O surely God would let you do
The things that make you really *You*
Dispensing Joy and Love and Grace,
My Lady of the morning face!

SINGING PLACES

THE LITTLE ROAD AND I

The little road went winding up,
Went winding up to meet the sky;
“I think I’ll fare that way,” quoth I,
And so the little road and I
Went winding up.

We deviated in and out,
All in and out and roundabout,
But ever facing toward the sky.
And when we reached it, by and by,
We found the Lord of Low and High
Who bade us rest a little while,
Since we had come a weary mile,
A dusty and a weary mile,
In winding up.

And so amid the sky and flowers,
The sky and flowers, which all were ours,
We rested there, the road and I.
And when you, too, shall come to die
You’ll find us on that rim of sky,
Waiting to greet you happily
As you come winding up.

SINGING PLACES

THE POET

From out the words we all can write
He brings new loveliness to light.
With stones we builders set at naught
He rears a radiant dome of thought.
Its curves are wrought of golden Youth,
Of undreamed Beauty, virgin Truth;
And we lift up our earth-born eyes
And marvel in unused surprise.

SINGING PLACES

THE SOARING OF THE SWALLOW

(Teach me to fly, Mother, teach me to fly!)
Oh, Brother of St. Francis, small swimmer in the
blue,
How marvellous thy instinct! Who guided thee
so true
(Not quite so high, Birdling, not quite so high!)
That blithely persistent, thou tak'st the up-
ward flight?
Thou makest, all undoubting, thy duty a delight.
Thy stumbling great Man-brother might joy with
thee to vie—
(Not quite so high, Birdling, not quite so high!)

SINGING PLACES

A PRAYER

Give me, dear Lord, an ample mind
That I through insight may be kind.
Let littlenesses of my Heart
Engender wings and swift depart!
And in my Soul let sympathy
Unfold her petals tenderly.
Dear Father, in humility
I do petition this of Thee.

SINGING PLACES

THE LITTLE MAID AND THE MASTER

She sat at the spinet, the Little Maid,
She sat alone and afraid—afraid—
For the Master had said she had played—had
 played!
So long she had practised so docilely
The scales with their counting of “One—Two—
 Three,”
And arpeggios trickling painfully—
And now came this fearful ecstasy!
The Master had said she had played—had played!
She slipped from her seat, all tremblingly,
And bent herself on her rounded knee,
While her voice ascended fragilely,
“O Master, Lord, please help Thou me
To practise ever faithfully!”
To The Master thus she prayed—she prayed.

SINGING PLACES

SENTINELS

All night I lie all white and still
 Upon my whiter stiller bed
And hear the Highway throng and fill,
 Till, late, the hurrying steps are sped.

The wagons rumble toward the Dim;
 O'er shrilling engines Distance creeps;
And I, I am alone with Him
 Who, keeping, slumbers not nor sleeps.

I would that I could enter where
 His healthy happy children are,
But He has left them to my care
 And one great steady solemn Star.

And so we keep our quiet charge
 Till Dawn dissolves the Grey and Grim.
Responsible, His Aides-at-large,
 The Star and I keep watch with Him.

SINGING PLACES

THE ANSWER

“Why gavest not Thou me the gift of Strength
That I might prove my manhood, O my Lord?
Why dost Thou thro’ my days’ wild wearying
length
Mute Unperformance unto me accord?”

“A pygmy task it is with body sure
To do, to act with vigor unabating.
’Tis only to the Strong who can endure
I give the task that’s thine—*the task of Wait-*
ing.”

SINGING PLACES

O YOUTH, SO SWIFTLY HAST THOU FLED

O Youth, so swiftly hast Thou fled,
Since erst pomegranate's juices red
We quaffed together—Thou and I—
A chalice drained too joyously
To chasten with a far-off dread.

Now pensive and demure I'm led
Down pallid pathways, tenanted
No longer by the butterfly,
O Youth!

For wingèd things with Thee have sped,
And creeping things do fare instead
Beside me, as I loiteringly
Wend down the path Maturity—
But Wisdom's morning lies ahead,
O Youth!

SINGING PLACES

REPENTANCE

In gardens red with roses once I played
All careless of the radiance of one;
Now naught but bloomless stalks hedge in my
road
As I, unflowered, walk my way, alone.

Mine eyes so dull among the blossomed ways,
Grow clear in darkling days' austerer close,
And strain them in the dimness for one small
Relenting petal from an unplucked rose!

SINGING PLACES

THE PASSING OF JOY

I heard Joy trail her garments near,
 (My Heart, she's seeking thee!)
So sped I forth to kiss their hem
 In blithe expectancy.

Then came a sobbing through the night,
 A moaning in the mist,
So knew I (Hush, my little Heart!)
 It was her shroud I kissed.

SINGING PLACES

THE BELATED NIGHTINGALE

When young I searched a darkling wood
For note of nightingale.
It came not, tho' my listening mood
Could scarce endure its fail.

Maturer, at the rim of night,
In Tuscan village small,
I caught a trill of bird delight—
“A thrush”, thought I, “doth call.”

At morn I said: “With joy I heard
A marvel-throated thrush.”
“A nightingale” (they said) “the bird
That broke the purple hush.”

But Youth's wild rose of bloom gone pale,
What broke the purple hush?
To them it was a nightingale—
To me—it was—a thrush!

SINGING PLACES

SINGERS

A solitary robin sang
Upon a lonely tree:
(Symbolic of my solitude
That robin's song for me.)

But tho' alone I, too, can sing,
(So Sorrow set me free!)
To swell the Music of the World
Is Joy enough for me.

SINGING PLACES

MY CIRCLE OF DELIGHT

Made up of daily arcs, whose sinuous lines
Curve ever-surely to the Circle drawn
In master-strokes and generous designs
By Him who painted the Creation's Dawn,
My Circle of Delight rounds out its plan.

My little hours move round from start to end,
Some golden, some subdued, but all divine;
Some glowing with the glory of a friend,
Some darkened by distress—but always *mine*,
My radiant ring—the Life of God in man.

For me the joyous task supremely given
By Him who lives in Wisdom's Perfect Light,
To mould my arcs of Life to compass Heaven
And so achieve my Circle of Delight
Which He had dreamed for me ere I began.

SINGING PLACES

SONG

“Oh! What is thy name, Little Bird, Little Bird,
(Bird fluttering its wings 'gainst my heart)?
Oh! speak me the truth—if thy name it be Youth,
So brave and so blithesome thou art!”

(O foolish One, no!
Ever swift, never slow
Are the wild wings of Youth to depart!)

“Oh! What is thy name, Little Bird, Little Bird,
(Bird singing so sweet in my breast)?
Thy name I would hear! Is it Happiness dear
That homing hath sought a soft nest?”

(O foolish One, no!
Fain doth Happiness go
Nor tarryeth ever to rest!)

“Oh! What is thy name, Little Bird, Little Bird,
(Bird cuddling so soft in my arm)?
O speak me thy name! Is it clear-singing Fame
That lieth so close and so warm?”

(O foolish One, no!
Fame is colder than snow,
Nor seeketh it shelter from harm.)

SINGING PLACES

“Then tell me thy name, Little Bird, Little Bird,
(Bird nestling so trustful and near)!”

“My name, Sweet my Own,
All the days thou hast known,
It is Love, it is Love, ever dear!”

SINGING PLACES

MOUNT KINSMAN IN AUTUMN

My sinuous shoulders bear, unspent,
The tamarack, fir and pine;
And, stalwart, bend against the sky
To the Divine Design.

Storm-sent, the ragged clouds sweep o'er
My wind-tossed, sun-seared head;
Caressing mists enswathe my brow
Where warmth and winter wed.

I stand serene when Eastern glow
Enwraps me in her bloom;
I stand serene, with aspect grim,
In twilight's gathering gloom.

Tho' men pass up and men pass down,
I stand, and give no sign;
My stalwart shoulders bend alone
To the Divine Design.

SINGING PLACES

SONNET OF THE HARVEST

In radiant death the sinking saffron sun
Departs a victor in the dying day.
A cricket chirps the lingering light away
As cautiously approach the shadows dun,
And, bleating, swift the little lambkins run
Adown the dimming path they often stray
Unwatched and sportive, in their awkward play.
And now the Harvest Moon's bright benison
Sweeps o'er the plain of yellowing harvest-fields
Where, in the gracious gloaming, sing and reap
The happy harvesters, whose music rings
Around the harmony the Harvest yields . . .
All ended, they full soon shall sink to sleep
And darkling Silence hold the Heart of Things.

SINGING PLACES

HAMMOCK SONG

Within my hempen crescent I
Am Voyager o'er land and sky,
The grasses brush me where I lie
And the vast blue is canopy.

All gloried green comes surge on surge
Of soft grass waves that silent merge
Toward Buttercup's deep golden urge.

The gnarled and wrinkled Apple Trees
Whose knotty, bowed and faithful knees
Uphold my crescent for my ease
Yield melody of Birds and Bees.

Gold Oriole and Chaffinch small,
And sparrow twittering thro' all
The other music, swiftly call.

And O my Heart! A Humming Bird
With ruby throat adds his wee word
Of perfect motion—the unheard
Sweetness of Grace his God conferred.

Within my hempen crescent I
When listless watch the Dusk draw nigh,
The Breezes are my Lullaby,
And Stars bend near for company.

SINGING PLACES

A PURITAN

I've felt the thrill that sweeps the soul
In olived Italy;
I've threaded ways of ancient Rome,
And dreamed in Tuscany;
In Paestan temples have I prayed
Upon my bended knee—
But Oh! the sweet, salt, fragrant air
Of Plymouth-by-the-sea!
The Alps are dazzling white and fair,
But in her Springtime green
Mount Moosilauke's the fairest peak
That e'er mine eyes have seen!
The high-throned coast of Portugal
Compels my scrutiny,
But Oh! the blue, blue Berkshire Hills!
Their beauty speaks to me!
Through cloisters old and dim my feet
Have reverently trod,
But to a small white Meeting-house
I go to find my God.
And so whene'er in alien lands
I joyfully may roam
It sings and sings within my heart:
"New England is my *home*!"

SINGING PLACES

SPRING IN LOUISBURG SQUARE

Nestling half way up the hillside, small and calm,
all unaware
Of the rushing and the rumble and the mart's
tumultuous roar,
A shrine to storied memory sleeps on the quaint
old Square,
Where Life slips back from Now to Then as
through an open door.

The very air of England seems caught and cher-
ished dear
Within this tiny leisured spot of brick and
guarded grass;
We think the thoughts of bygone days, and "now
that April's here,"
Dream dreams of Youth and violets, all lovely
things that pass.

The houses' brick austerity grows friendly and
benign
Beneath the jocund wooing sun; the slim young
leaves unfold;
A juvenile grey squirrel, his bushy tail in line,
Runs up an ancient lichened elm and there
begins to scold.

SINGING PLACES

The chirping chickadees retort, and soon the
startled air

Is rent by myriad chatterings; till, sweet, a
bluebird's note

Restores the primal harmony, and once again the
Square

Sleeps on in "poetry of earth", quiescent and
remote.

SINGING PLACES

THE DAILY PAGEANT

First, little Hours tricked out in golden Dawn
Who send their fleet and wingèd heralds round
To wake the world with sweetly chosen notes
From yellow, blue and brown befeathered throats
That swell soniferous with supple sound.
And tiny winds in sleepy blades of grass
That dream them flowers, begin to stretch and
wake

And wash themselves within a cup of dew—
Dear little children-Hours that are so few!

Then, older mid-day Hours brave to behold
In liveries of brilliant blue and gold;
Maturer Hours of later afternoon

In shimmering mixture that an azure haze
Subduing sunshine, fashions for the Day's
Most lovely garment—fading Oh too soon!

Next sunset Hours like cardinals arrayed
By Nature, loving purple in parade;
Such pomp and circumstance she now bestows,
Such lavishness—as when she shapes a Rose!
And last, as vaguer grow the Nears and Fars,
There comes a dim procession bearing stars.

How sadly small the stature of his soul
Who, gazing on this pageant of a Day,
Can only sigh and blindly turn away—
Instead of kneeling down in joy to pray!

SINGING PLACES

THE CLEARER VIEW

My stained-glass days, so brief and beautiful,
Mid Gothic arches spent, with filtering light
Of amber and of amethyst, are gone.
Yet, love I more my present hours, all filled
With visions of the sun's unveilèd light
Where gazing deep into the Heart of things
I see my God, undimmed, approachable,
Walk in the gladsome garden of His world.

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